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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the three issues of the ARTE newsletter published during 1993. This newsletter describes organizational objectives and activities of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English (ARTE), and presents articles of interest to rural English teachers. Articles discuss: (1) promoting and capitalizing on positive feelings of family among rural school staff; (2) a schoolwide business venture at Lamoni (Iowa) Middle School, in which students controlled all aspects of management, production, and sales; (3) "The New Yorker" Education Program, and how the magazine can be used in rural high school English classes; (4) subject matter as a vehicle rather than a focus of learning; (5) a study of the writing experiences and attitudes of Coastal Carolina College freshmen; (6) the importance of meaningful writing assignments for student attitudes and outcomes; (7) new resources to enrich English instruction, particularly "Ideas for the Working Classroom," which is volume 27 of a National Council of Teachers of English series on classroom practices in teaching English; and (8) a fifth grade class's experiences in creative writing. Materials related to the organization include discussions of organizational goals and the role of ARTE in educational improvement efforts, the ARTE constitution, proposals for organizational action to improve rural education, membership information, meeting minutes, tips for influencing public policy, workshop announcements, and a member autobiography. (SV)

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A WORK OF ARTE

1993 VOLUME 3, NUMBERS 1-3

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A Work of ARTE

The Newsletter of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English

Volume 3, Number 1 *Spring, 1993*

Inside *A Work of ARTE* . . .

Elaine Berman, education program director for *The New Yorker*, discusses how this publication can be a valuable text in the rural teacher's classroom (pages 5 and 6).

See the membership update and minutes of the annual business meeting of ARTE (pages 6 and 7).

As a summary of his ARTE-sponsored session at the NCTE National Convention in Louisville, **Jim Weate** describes a thematic project that challenges students with a real-life business venture (pages 3-5).

Teachers looking for a summer workshop in reading-writing workshop and/or whole-language instruction should read the announcement from Walloon Institute (page 8).

Notes from the Chair

Goals for ARTE assessed

by Jim Weate

When I became chair of ARTE at Seattle in 1991, I pledged myself to achieving five major goals. The 1992 NCTE Convention in Louisville provided ARTE members a chance to review our progress. Some high points and some places needing improvement or goal reassessment emerged.

The first goal was to have a quality newsletter three times a year and a quality journal once a year. Sonja Lutz, Sarah Bennett and Michelle Walker as newsletter editors and many ARTE members as contributors, and Dick deRosa as journal editor and several ARTE members as contributors helped us meet that goal.

The second goal was to have an anthology. The subgoals called for articles to be identified in two years and publication in three years. The articles have been almost all identified, a publisher has tentatively agreed to print for us, and the release date is scheduled for late summer of 1993. We are somewhat ahead of schedule on this goal.

The third goal called for 100 ARTE members by the end of 1991 and 200 members by the end of 1992. We are at 45 members following renewals after hitting 60 this year. Yet, curiosity about our group has been increasing. ARTE members at the business meeting in Louisville expressed the feeling that this goal still seems reasonable but that we need to extend the time to five years from the time we organized to reach the desirable 200-plus. (We need to keep reminding ourselves that 200-plus is necessary for tax-exempt status and bulk-mailing privileges.) This goal was not reached but probably needs to be revised so that the time frame is more realistic.

The fourth goal stated that an announcement of ARTE would be sent to NCTE state and regional affiliates for them to put into their publications. This goal has been met. While sending these affiliates a notice that we are an assembly of NCTE does not mean they will publish our announcement, ARTE members from several different states said they had seen such a news item in the publication from their state.

The fifth and final goal recognized the need for ARTE to have a list of ways that our group can help the profession and the public. These lists were to be compiled by 1993. The list for the profession is stated tentatively in the brochures which were prepared for distribution at various English teachers' meetings. (A copy will be enclosed along with this issue of *A Work of ARTE*. Any ARTE member wishing to distribute these should feel free to duplicate the copy.) A list of ways we will be helping the public remains to be compiled. This list will probably be completed by 1993, as called for in the goals.

We are making progress. I consider it a pleasure serving as chair and look forward to this second year of my term.

ARTE welcomes building membership

Rainier (Oregon) High School has become the first school building to seek membership in ARTE. This is in accordance with the provisions approved at the 1991 ARTE Annual Business Meeting in Seattle. Beth Hunnicutt will serve as contact person. We welcome Rainier High School into ARTE and encourage other buildings to make a similar affiliation.

While the building memberships are not intended to replace individual memberships, they are one way to reach an even larger number of rural English teachers than we could achieve by having only individual memberships.

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Editorially yours . . .

Rural schools should capitalize on positive feelings of family

by Michelle Walker

Our staff, people that I've grown to consider family, has gone through some rough times this winter; and I'm looking forward to the melting of lingering snow that will signal the end of this dismal winter. With the coming spring, I also hope to put aside the bittersweet thoughts I've had about teachers (and students) as family.

Although I've found myself cherishing the fact that much of what makes coming to school enjoyable involves my colleagues, I've also been mourning, perhaps prematurely, the passing into retirement of some of these "old war horses." I, like most of you, teach in a small school in which a close atmosphere has developed; and these colleagues mean much more to me than merely people who happen to teach in the same place. The feelings we have, although they largely go unspoken, show we are friends and even more, family.

My "family," however, is aging rapidly. The average age of our combined junior-senior high staff of 41 teachers is approximately 45 years of age, and within the last month we unfortunately got a taste of life around this building without the people who make being here such fun. Our energetic, dynamic band director collapsed at solo-ensemble festival and discovered major arterial blockages. Also, a 25-year veteran of my English department, recently had a brush with cancer. Even the math department took a beating when one teacher broke her leg and another had to have hernia surgery.

The situation came to a head one day two weeks ago. Because of these occurrences and other teachers being gone for some special workshops, we had 24 substitute teachers in the building, some of whom were even **my** former students—me, the one who for years had the distinction of being the youngest teacher in the building. Ask me if I became shockingly aware of my mortality and that of everyone around me. Ironically, the closeness that I value also causes pain. But would I give up this family, growing shabbier and more fragile with age? You can bet I wouldn't.

I think that we in rural schools have the unique opportunity to develop "the ties that bind" even beyond retirement. In our community, teachers who leave the classroom after years of service remain in our midst, or at least on the fringes. I don't think that our urban and suburban fellow teachers can say the same. Just the sheer numbers preclude such close-knit interaction as exists among teachers in rural schools.

Do we lucky ones appreciate our situation? I don't think we do. I think we take our relationships for granted because we're so used to them, like a comfortable pair of old shoes. Should we pay more attention? I think we should. At least I'm finding myself doing so since I got that bitter taste of what my teaching day would be like without these people who give so much of themselves to their students and each other day after day.

We've even formed a teacher support group—two, in fact, since the interest is so high— which meets once a week, giving some of us the opportunity to become even closer and to have a forum in which to discuss some deep issues that go beyond lounge whining. Is this a risky venture? Sure. But isn't everything worthwhile risky? Yes. And I think that cultivating a family atmosphere among the adults in a school rubs off on students and gives them positive models for successful relationships, something sadly lacking in many of their real familes. Anything that can make the work place more of a home for those of us who do the tough job of teaching and acting as family for our students everyday can only improve the lives of our students.

Rural administrators would be wise to see their building staff as family and do all in their power to cultivate the relationships that so naturally develop in our small schools. In my mind, they are our most precious resource, one that doesn't cost a cent of taxpayers' money but something that could be the very essence of educational reform and the improvement of our nation's schools.

A Work of ARTE is published three times a year by the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English.

The assembly welcomes submissions to this newsletter in the form of articles, letters, announcements, etc. Send all pieces for publication consideration to Michelle Walker, editor, 4720 West Fillmore Road, Ithaca, Michigan 48847

Membership in the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English of the National Council of Teachers of English may be obtained by contacting Willa Mae Kippes, P.O. Box 302, 401 12th Street, Gilcrest, Colorado 80623 and sending a check or money order for $10.

Building memberships are $25 per school building. A building membership entitles the school's personnel to appoint one person from their building as the representative. This person will have voting rights at ARTE business meetings and will serve as the contact person for the building. While a contact person can vote at ARTE business meetings, unless the person also joins as an individual membver, he or she cannot hold an ARTE office, by decision of the ARTE executive board.

The contact person is the person to whom all ARTE correspondence will be sent. It is that person's duty to route the newsletter and journal to other teachers in the building who would be interested in these publications.

Students learn from business venture

by Jim Weate

During the last several weeks of 1988 and again in 1991, Lamoni Middle School students got all they bargained for and then some when they suddenly became owners, managers, manufacturers, advertisers, and salespeople in their own unique business. By the time four weeks had passed by, they weren't sure they were ready to proclaim school as too demanding and the work-world as the place to be.

The students were involved in the study of economics and related topics as an introduction to this unit. The final culminating experience for the unit was a school-wide business, which we named LMS, Inc. This company was designed to let the students experience, first hand, the "world of work."

We began with a pretest which simply tested basic economic concepts. Classroom instruction began in each class whenever the teacher felt it was most appropriate to fit into the time frame of the unit. We invited guest speakers who have developed businesses of their own. Dwight Vredenburg, retired president and CEO of Hy-Vee Food Stores, one of the nation's top twenty food chains, and a Lamoni High School graduate, was one guest, for example. Another was a visiting Soviet agricultural economist. We also utilized a school board member who, along with her husband, has developed a very successful mail-order business making replicas of highly sought-after antiques.

We assigned each student to complete a project notebook as we studied this unit. These notebooks contained various assignments from each class which would help the students put together a summary of their experiences and understanding of economics. It included personal information, like a copy of their letter of application and resume, as well as a summary of their interview, a summary of each guest speaker, a report of their work experiences in this business venture, and a comparison between work and school. Students could include charts or graphs showing the success of our business. They also included newspaper and magazine clippings of current economic issues in the world today with the students' interpretations of each of these clippings.

To begin the actual LMS, Inc. company, the teachers, acting as the Board of Directors, developed job descriptions for the five top management positions in the company: the President, Vice President of Finance, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Vice President of Production, and Vice President of Personnel and Human Relations. We advertised these positions by signs in the school hallways and in our daily bulletin so that interested students could apply to fill these positions. Applicants submitted a letter of application and resume to the middle school office by a specified date. Our students did an excellent job of writing these letters, and their resumes were very creative.

Samples of a letter and a resume supposedly written by Jack R. Unshill, based on the fictional Mother Goose personality Jack of "Jack and Jill" fame, were given to students to help in this endeavor.

Interviews were scheduled with the secretary for all applicants. These were typically held before or after school. Once again, Jack R. Unshill figured in the process since one teacher played the part of Jack while the other teachers asked him questions in a mock interview.

One special interview which we all remember was with a sixth grade boy. Carrying his brief case, he walked into the room where five of us teachers were waiting; and the first thing he did was hand each of us his business card which had been professionally printed. He was dressed in the very best clothes he owned, and he showed us the self-confidence and pride of a real executive. This boy was not from the family whose father was a doctor or president of a large corporation. In fact, he has no father living at home, and his mother works only part time (By the way, she does work for our local newspaper and printing company.). He had made use of every resource he had available to compete for this job against more experienced seventh and eighth grade students. We found out later that he had talked with the local banker as well as other business people in town, asking for advice on how to interview for a position. Needless to say, he earned the position of Vice President of Marketing and Sales and hired some very capable eighth grade students as managers to work under him His department was so successful that we had to expand our production time by three days to fill all the orders taken by his sales team.

As soon as they were chosen, the president and vice presidents met to set up the structure of the business. Given ninety-plus students, each of whom must be hired in the best position to create the most successful business possible, the executives had to decide how many employees were needed in each department and what positions had to be created to make each department work efficiently. A job description had to be written for each position before the executives could advertise for applicants.

Somewhere along the way, as all of these other activities were happening, we had to choose the products which we were going to sell. This step was not done just at this point in the time line but started much earlier and needed lots of suggestions and discussion to make the best decision in a cooperative manner. It moved along concurrently with some of the other operations. We chose a variety of products with a price range from a couple of dollars up to thirteen dollars.

After advertising for applicants, all students were interviewed by the vice presidents or managers and hired for a position in the company. The vice presidents and managers not only had to hire the best person for each position but also had to have satisfied employees, so this was not an easy task.

The students wrote and conducted their own marketing survey to help determine what the people in our community

(See Business page 4.)

(Business from page 3)

would buy, the price range they would consider spending, and the colors needed for decorating. We guided students in the choice of products because they had to be products which 11, 12, 13 and 14 year olds were capable of producing at high quality. It was also important to think of how each product would be produced so that the steps of production could fit into the production facilities which were available. If there were not sufficient sawing areas, we couldn't plan an item which requires long, tedious steps on a saw, for example.

The officers in the area of finance wrote a busines plan after we determined the products we intended to produce. They took this plan to our local bank to ask for a loan. Both times we let the students make their own appointment and go to the bank on their own; we did not call in advance to make any prior arrangements nor did we explain during the appointment about the business. Due to legal constraints of minors not being able to sign for a loan, one teacher accompanied the students to finalize the business transaction, but this teacher sat off to the side while discussions were ensuing. The loan officer was very impressed with the students and told them that they had an excellent business plan. They got the loan on their own and set up a checking account at the bank to make daily deposits and to be able to write checks for expenses.

Advertising began with an article in the local newspaper. The marketing and sales department designed order forms and made sales kits containing products to be sold. One of the most challenging parts of our business was making the correct number of bears to fill all the orders, or getting the right color of cow with the right number of spots and the right color of pig together, along with the horse with the right color of yarn mane, and the lamb with the blue ribbon. Thus we considered just making a certain quantity of items first and then going out and trying to sell them. But this would be the easy way. We felt that some of the best learning comes from communication skills which students develop. Taking orders from customers, and then passing these orders on from department to department through our company until the correct product comes out at the end requires good communication and organization. Another good learning experience was trying to sell as much as possible but not overselling acccording to our time frame of production.

When the week finally arrived for full-scale production, our school was transformed into a factory. Each room became a part of the business. An office area was set up and files kept and desks organized just like real executives'. As the sales team organized sales throughout the town, everyone else was busy producing products to be sold or filling orders.

In order to be ready for start-up on Day One, having each department busy from the beginning, we had to do some preparations ahead of time. Since we planned to sell wooden items, we had to have some sawing done ahead, so we planned a mini-course in the shop area to cover this. Although we planned ahead and tried to anticipate all problems which might arise, there were many real-life crises which arose during production anyway. The first year, we were shut down for an afternoon because all the band saw blades were broken, so certain departments had to take time off until a trip was made to Des Moines, 80 miles away, to get repair parts. We also found that one band saw could not keep up with all the wood project orders, so this meant that someone had to look for subcontractors in the community to help with this part of the business. Fortunately, we have a number of home craftsmen who were able and willing to help out. Flexibility was a must to make things work.

Some students began to feel the monotony of sanding wood all day or painting spots on cows for days. Some asked for transfers through the Personnel Department. A few got fired and had to be reassigned. The opportunity to practice resolving conflicts and dealing with others was at its peak. Leadership emerged from students who did not excel in the classroom. The talents of some students, whether at the sewing machine, through artistic abilities, by balancing accounts, or in conflict resolution, began to show up.

Our school, being small, might have an advantage over much larger districts, who can't visualize how this would work with large enrollments. Perhaps larger districts could consider only one class doing this unit (something the eighth grade might study each year). Or maybe they could have separate divisions of the business, each producing a different product and each with their own executives.

Throughout the whole IDU, the teachers tried to stay in the background as much as possible and allow the leadership to come from the students. We wanted them to feel like LMS, Inc. belonged to them, and decisions regarding the business were made by students as much as possible. As teachers, we found this very difficult to do, and we tended to become too involved at times. We tried to keep reminding each other as we saw one another stepping in when decisions could be made by the students.

As the original LMS, Inc. (1988) closed its doors and students became students again, we had cleared nearly $1,800 in profit. Even though this sounded wonderful to the students, they had to figure that we were the largest employer in our town for our couple of weeks of production. They needed to figure how many hours went into producing our products and calculate what the payroll would be for that period of time at minimum wage. There were so many learning opportunities in the IDU which the teachers know they didn't take full advantage of.

We chose to donate $500 of our profits to the local food pantry, which provides food and necessities to those in need in our community. We felt this was our way of saying "thank you" to everyone in the community for their support. After all, the money had come from the community; we felt it should be returned to the community. The school and booster club were raising money for a new wooden floor in our gymnasium that year, and the students felt this was something they could use all through high school; so they donated $500 of their money to that project. We also took a trip to Living History Farms in Des Moines for a field day in the spring during our Rural Life Unit, and our profits paid for each student's admission to the farms. A stereo system was

(See Business page 5.)

CONSTITUTION OF
THE ASSEMBLY OF RURAL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Article I NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English of the National Council of Teachers of English, hereafter referred to as the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English or ARTE or Assembly.

Article II PURPOSE

The purpose of this Assembly is to promote communication and cooperation among all in-service or pre-service educators who have a special interest in teaching English language arts in rural schools; to promote the teaching of English which represents the diverse multi-cultural heritage of America; to present programs and special projects on this subject (see Amendment I); to encourage the development of research, experimentation, and investigation of effective teaching and scholarship in rural school teaching; to promote writing of articles and publication devoted to it; and to integrate the efforts of those with an interest in the subject.

Article III MEMBERSHIP

Section I. Qualifications.

Membership shall be open to any individual or group committed to the teaching of English in rural schools. The membership year shall be consistent with the fiscal year of NCTE.

Section II. Dues.

Dues shall be determined by the Executive Board of this assembly. Payment of dues qualifies an individual as a voting member and entitles the member to hold office.

Article IV AFFILIATION

The Assembly of Rural Teachers of English shall be affiliated with the National Council of Teachers of English, as provided for by the Constitution of NCTE. In assuming the responsibilities of such an affiliation, the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English shall pay the annual dues required for affiliation and shall be represented by a Liaison Officer from the Assembly to NCTE, as provided for by the Constitution of NCTE.

Article V MEETINGS

The Assembly of Rural Teachers of English shall have at least one meeting a year which shall be the Annual Business Meeting and shall be held at the annual convention of NCTE. Provided that ample written notice is given, additional meetings may be held if considered necessary by the Executive Board of the Assembly.

Article VI OFFICERS

Section A. Composition.

The officers of the Assembly shall be a Chair, an Associate Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. They must be members of NCTE at the time of election and while serving. The terms of offices shall be for two years. The terms of these officers may be renewed by election up to a maximum of two terms (six years total).

Section B. Duties.

1. The Chair shall call, arrange for, and preside at all meetings of the Assembly and the Executive Board; appoint the members of all committees, with the advice and approval of the Executive Board; and have charge of conducting the business of the Assembly. Should a vacancy occur on the Executive Board, the Chair shall appoint an individual to fill the unexpired term. The Chair or the chair's

designate shall serve as a Liaison Officer to NCTE and shall represent the Assembly to the Board of Directors of NCTE.

2. The Associate Chair shall assist the Chair in the duties outlined above; substitute for the Chair if necessary; and serve as program chair. Should the Chair be unable to complete the term of office, the Associate Chair shall assume that office for the remainder of the term. The Associate Chair shall represent the Assembly to the Board of Directors of NCTE when Assembly membership warrants a second Director.

3. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Assembly and of the Executive Board, distribute copies of such minutes to the Executive Board within 30 days of such meetings, conduct correspondence for the Assembly, serve as Parliamentarian, and send or arrange for notices to be sent to members.

4. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all financial transactions of the Assembly and of committees created by the Execu tive Board; keep an up-to-date membership list; send dues notices; and serve on the Membership Committee.

Article VII EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section A. Members.

The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers named above; the immediate past Chair (who shall serve as an ex- officio voting member); the editor of the newsletter; and the editor of the journal. All individuals must be members of NCTE at the time of election and while serving. Acceptance of a position on the Executive Board will be with the understanding that the person plans to attend all meetings of the Assembly and the Executive Board. Insofar as possible, the Executive Board shall represent various teaching fields, interests, geographic areas, and minority groups of Assembly members. The Executive Board shall also be empowered to invite up to three additional members to serve as ex-officio nonvoting members (see Amendment II).

Section B. Duties.

1. The Executive Board shall have primary responsibility for conducting the business of the Assembly, including determining policies, delegating responsibility, and appropriating funds.
2. The Editors of the newsletter and the journal shall coordinate information received from Executive Board members, Assembly members, and other sources; publish a newsletter and a journal on a regular schedule; and mail the publications to Assembly members. The editors shall be appointed to this position by the Executive Board.

Section C. Term.

The Executive Board members who are appointed to serve as ex-officio nonvoting members shall normally serve for a term of three years. At the first appointment, however, those appointed to the Executive Board shall draw lots for terms of office: one person shall serve for one year, one person shall serve for two years, and one person for three years [see Amendment III].

Article VIII NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section A. Procedure.

Officers and Executive Board members, except the editors and the immediate past Chair, shall be nominated by a Nominating Committee and elected by mail ballot. Such ballot must be distributed to members eligible to vote at least one month before the Annual Business Meeting and returned to the Chair of the Nominating Committee at least ten days before the date of that meeting. (For purposes of the first election and until the adoption of these Bylaws, a slate shall be presented to those eligible for membership and voted upon by mail as soon as possible after the 1990 NCTE Annual Convention. The first term of office shall begin as soon as assembly status is granted by NCTE and will run until 1993.)

Section B. Nominations through Nominating Committee.
The Nominating Committee shall consist of a chair and two other Assembly members, appointed by the Chair of the Assembly, and with the consent of the Executive Board, within one month following the Annual Business Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of up to two candidates per office to the Executive Committee no later than two months before ballots are distributed. (The Ad Hoc Assembly Steering Committee shall serve as Nominating Committee until the adoption of these Bylaws.)

Section C. Nomination by Petition.
Candidates for any vacancy may be nominated by membership petition provided that nomination is accompanied by a petition signed by at least five voting members of the Assembly, that the petition is accompanied by written consent of the person nominated, and that the petition is submitted to the chair of the Nomination Committee at least two months before mail ballots are distributed.

Section D. Balloting.
A copy of the ballot shall be mailed by the Secretary to each voting member at least one month before the Annual Business Meeting; in order to be tallied, a ballot must be returned to the Secretary at least ten days before the Annual Business Meeting. The Secretary shall notify all candidates, members of the Executive Board, and members of the Nominating Committee of the results of an election as soon as possible after the ballots are counted.

Section E. Number of Elect to Office.
A majority, or plurality, is required to elect to office any nominated candidate.

Section F. Assumption of Duties.
New officers and Executive Board shall assume their terms of office on the day after Thanksgiving each year.

Article IX QUORUM
A quorum shall be those members present at any announced meeting. At all quorum meetings, Roberts' Rules of Order shall be used to guide quorum proceedings.

Article X COMMITTEES
Section A. Standing Committees.
Standing committees of this Assembly shall be Nomination, Membership, Publicity, Publication, and Resolutions. All shall be appointed annually.

Section B. Special Committees.
Special committees may be appointed for specific purposes.

Article XI IF ORGANIZATION CEASES TO EXIST
If this organization becomes inactive, all remaining monies shall be transferred to the National Council of Teachers of English; if the National Council of Teachers of English ceases to exist, all remaining monies shall be transferred to the United States Department of Education to fund efforts in rural education.

Article XII AMENDMENTS
The Bylaws of this Constitution may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the members attending the Annual Business Meeting or of those participating in a mail ballot submitted to the voting members of the Assembly. Written notice of a proposed amendment must be ordered by the Executive Board and submitted to the voting members of the Assembly at least one month before the vote is taken.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Amendment I. In order to eliminate the confusion of an unclear antecedent, the words "this subject" in the third phrase of ***Article II--PURPOSE*** as underlined in the above Constitution were replaced at the November 23, 1991, business meeting of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English with the words "teaching English language arts in rural schools." The total phrase will now read: "to present programs and special projects on teaching English language arts in rural schools."

Amendment II. The last sentence under ***Article VII--EXECUTIVE BOARD, Section A. Members.***, as underlined in the above Constitution were replaced at the November 23, 1991, business meeting of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English. The original sentence, "The Executive Board shall also be empowered to invite up to three additional members to serve as ex-officio nonvoting members," is hereby replaced with, "The Executive Board shall include the chairs of the standing committees as ex-officio nonvoting members."

Amendment III. To achieve a consistency between ***Article VII--EXECUTIVE BOARD, Section A. Members.***, which was amended in Amendment II. and ***Article VII--EXECUTIVE BOARD, Section C. Term.***, a change in term of office for ex-officio nonvoting members was made at the November 21, 1992, business meeting of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English. The original wording of the constitution which stated, "The Executive Board members who are appointed to serve as ex-officio nonvoting members shall normally serve for a term of three years. At the first appoinment, however, those appointed to the Executive Board shall draw lots for terms of office: one person shall serve for one year, one person shall serve for two years, and one person for three years," is hereby replaced with, "The Executive Board members who are ex-officio nonvoting members shall serve a term concurrent with their tenures as chairs of standing committees. While their terms are one-year appointments, as stated in ***Article X--COMMITTEES, Section A. Standing Committees,*** it is to be expected that on many occasions these chairs will be appointed to succeed themselves. When that occurs, they may serve more than one year as an Executive Board member."

(Business from page 4)
purchased to use at our Fun Nights and Spring Dance. And with less that two dollars left per student, we all went to the local Dairy Queen and had an ice cream party during the last week of school.

The second round of LMS, Inc. (1991) activities resulted in profits of $1,800 again. And again we donated $500 to the food pantry. We also contributed to a weight training machine and risers for the choir. The money which remained, about $300, was spent on an end-of-the-year pizza party for all students and teachers during lunch hour.

A parent coming to us during the summer after LMS, Inc. told us that her son had used his knowledge of writing a letter of application and resume and got called in for an interview for a summer job. He said there would be no problem with the interview because he knew how to do that, too. He got the job! His mother was very impressed with what he had learned during this unit.

Those are the stories that make it all worthwhile. So much of the learning that will take place when you undertake a project like this cannot be measured in terms of any evaluation scale. It is only as our young people use the knowledge they learn in their everyday situations that the real value is shown.

Each of the teachers wrote his or her evaluation of the project just as the students did at the end. Mine was in the form of a newspaper article both times, although the first one was never sent in for publication. One of the teachers wrote a letter in 1988 to the employees of LMS, Inc. expressing her appreciation to them for a job well done. She listed problems she saw, such as hiring too many people for management positions and too much teacher involvement in the business. We tried to implement both student and teacher sugestions from 1988 into the 1991 plan. Lack of training was a weakness; getting items through the assembly line to meet a specific order was a problem; better quality control at each level of the assembly line was needed. But overall, we all felt great about the outcome of our business both times.

The excitement from students who had brothers and sisters involved with our original LMS, Inc. as they found out it was to be reopened last year was so gratifying. It is something that the high school students mention when they come back to see us. I think it will be one of those school experiences that will always be relived in class runions and memories of school days. We would recommend to other schools that they try something like it.

Lamoni, Iowa

Educational program helps teachers

by Elaine Bernman

Why I was asked, would *The New Yorker* Education Program want to join ARTE? Actually, it was a logical step for us. Let me explain.

When we started our Education Program in the fall of 1986, I assumed that the first teachers to sign up would be from major universities, large suburban high schools, and well-known independent schools. How wrong I was. Although we have had our fair share of teachers from these types of schools participate in *The New Yorker* Education Program, we have found a large number of subscribers coming from the tiniest of towns all across the country.

All it takes for a teacher to use *The New Yorker* in the classroom is a love for the magazine and a desire to try something new. Teachers tell us that their students respond enthusiastically—initially, they love the cartoons, the color, the ads—and before long, they're reading the book and movie reviews, some of the long and important fact pieces and even the fiction and poetry. Since the magazine is essentially a new text every week, the teacher and the students approach it on an equal basis and delve into it together. There is no accepted canon of criticism. Many teachers respond well to this kind of excitement in their teaching.

I was introduced to ARTE by Robert Doxtator, whom I met at the NCTE Convention in Louisville in November '92 and who has used *The New Yorker* at Chadron (NE) State College for several years. He set up a two-way interactive audiographics system utilizing telephones and computers from his home base at the college. This "distance learning project" involved two sites outside of Chadron—four students were located in Wallace, NE and two in Calloway—along with 12 in Chadron. Doxtator presented assignments from *The New Yorker* over the phone and also displayed them on a TV monitor. Students wrote papers about Talk pieces, cartoons, etc. Their work could be scanned, put in a data file and displayed on a TV monitor. The students then discussed *The New Yorker* and their assignments over the phone.

One of the first high school teachers from a small town to have a subscription to *The New Yorker* for her students through our program was Linda Bohrer-Harter of Wallace, ID. As I came to know Linda through many phone conversations, she suggested that I exhibit at the NCTE Northwest Regional Conference in Coeur d'Alene, ID in April 1988. While there, I visited the small town of Wallace; at the time it had the distinction of having the only stoplight on the Interstate from coast to coast. I realized then that if students in Wallace could read and enjoy *The New Yorker* (and Linda assured me that they did), then it was a matter of the teacher presenting the material and not an issue of the students being too unsophisticated for *The New Yorker*, a lament I sometimes hear from teachers.

We have many materials to support our teachers. We have a composite guide of assignments with dozens of easy-to-follow and creative suggestions, a cartoon booklet for the classroom, a video which we lend to teachers, and a piece on

(See Program page 6.)

(Program from page 5)

our renowned Fact-Checking Department. We have a toll-free number (800-223-0200), and we are always available to answer teachers' questions and even to provide assistance to students who need information to help them with their term papers.

So why would a teacher from Wallace, ID, Contoocook, NH, or Georgetown, KY, want to have his/her students read *The New Yorker*? It is, after all, a magazine that many consider the ultimate in sophistication. Let the teachers speak for themselves:

Dick deRosa of Fort Plain (NY) High School writes, "If I do not expose my very rural and insulated students to such cultural productions, they will not have the pleasure of it becoming a part of their lives."

Jean Ferrell, Logan, WV says, "To enter an Appalachian classroom where previously it has been an accomplishment to overcome the use of *ain't* and to see a sophisticated magazine expand the thinking and reading of high school students has been a most rewarding experience."

And Madeleine Wagner from Carey (ID) High School says, "Our biggest thrill was finding a tiny ad on a back page for a rafting trip down Idaho's own Snake River. It was a nice way to bridge the Idaho-New York gap."

We want young readers from all across the country to meet the *The New Yorker*; and we think teachers, sharing their enthusiasm and affection for the magazine, provide an excellent introduction. At $5 per subscription a semester, what could be easier? And what text could cost so little?

We have been very pleased with the progress of our Education Program. More than 15,000 students in all 50 states are involved in the program each year. The feedback is very gratifying. For further information, call Elaine Berman at (800)223-0200 or, in New York, (212)536-5415; or write: Elaine Berman, Education Program Director, *The New Yorker* Magazine, 20 West 43 Street, New York, NY 10036-7440. We look forward to hearing from you.

New York, New York

Membership Update

The following people had not rejoined ARTE as of November 25, 1992:

Dody Boswell	Mary Frances Linden	Bruce Brady
Marsha L.R. Looysen	David Clinefelter	Dr. Lynn Meeks
Pamela Clinefelter	Mary Ann Nellis	Ike Coleman
Deane O'Dell	Richard deRosa	Pete Silva
Janelle Finke	Susan Stires	Dianne Harper
Paul Theobald	Cathy Kite	Eliot Wigginton
Julian Kite	Bev Wood	Lorraine Krause
Sharon Woodsum		

Two ARTE members have changed their mailing addresses:

Alfredo Lujan
159-D Calle ojo Feliz
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Sara L. Parkin
2140 Washington Way
Longview, Washington 98632

One ARTE member has changed her name: Brenda Mills is now Brenda Doxtator.

Several new members have joined ARTE.

Elaine Berman
Education Program Director
The New Yorker
20 West 43 Street
New York, New York 10036-7440

Ginny Carney
P.O. Box 214316
Anchorage, Alaska 99521-4316

Beth Hunnicutt
500 Hillcrest Road
St. Helens, Oregon 97051

Charlotte Jeskey
14620 Kings Valley Hwy.
Monmouth, Oregon 97361

Cindy Johanek
607 W. Charles Street Apt. 1
Muncie, Indiana 47305

Tammy Kammer
435 North First
Rogers City, Michigan 49779

Dan Labby
Wittenberg High School
Wittenberg, Wisconsin 54499

Jane Willis
468 Hwy. 790
Bronston, Kentucky 42518

Richard Lessard
159 Thomas Avenue
Alpena, Michigan 49707

Sue Ann Payne
205 NorthSilver
Lamoni, Iowa 50140

Rainier High School
c/o Beth Hunnicutt, Contact Person
P.O Box 420
Rainier, Oregon 97048

Martha Rhynes
Rt. 1 Box 192
Stonewall, Oklahoma 74871

Dorothy Trusock, Assistant Dean
College of Education, P.O Box 940
Arkansas State University
State University, Arkansas 72467

Doretta Turpin
Stuart High School
Stuart, Oklahoma 74570

Rosemary K. Tursak
317 E. Main
Morenci, Michigan 49256

Minutes of the meeting of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention, Louisville, Kentucky, November 21 1992

Members present:
Craig A. Akey
Brenda Doxtator
Pauling Hodges
Willa Mae Kippes
Michelle Walker
Gwen M. Weate
Jim Weate
Keith Younker

Visitors:
Beth Hunnicutt
Robert L. Doxtator

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jim Weate at 5:30 P.M. in Room 204 of the Louisville Convention Center.

By group consensus, Keith Younker functioned as acting parliamentarian since the secretary tends to be too busy to handle taking notes while serving as parliamentarian as well.

REPORTS:

Secretary's Report of the Nov. 23, 1991 Annual Convention:

Michelle Walker moved to accept. Willa Mae Kippes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

Presented by Craig Akey, with brief explanations and discussion.

Balance is $377.82

Keith Younker moved to accept. Paula Hodges seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Membership Committee:

Willa Mae Kippes reported that the May reminders for renewals did not produce much response, but the October and November notices yielded several renewals. Membership is now about 45, and Willa Mae plans to send updated membership lists. Jim distributed brochures for members to use when recruiting new members.

Publicity Committee:

no report since no members of this committee were present

Publications Committee:

Michelle Walker reported that the newsletter needs more submissions. Jim Weate reported that because of the former editor's problems, he finished the journal himself. Alfredo Lujan will be the new editor. Jim also stated that the North Central Regional Education Lab of Oakbrook, Illinois, volunteered to be the publisher of the anthology. The lab will gather permission rights and coordinate and publish projects. The projected publishing date for the anthology, bound and ready to sell, is August '93. It will be advertised by NCREL to all superintendents in the North Central region and to other regional education labs.

Resolutions Comittee:

Keith Younker reported that no resolutions are proposed at this time.

Nominations Committee:

Paula Hodges presented the slate:

chairperson, Craig Akey and Sara Parkin
associate chairperson, Jim Weate
secretary, Sara Bennett
treasurer, Willa Mae Kippes

OLD BUSINESS:

Chair Jim Weate stated that we have met the following goals: publishing a quality newsletter three times a year, publishing a journal once a year, and being prepared to publish an anthology within two years. We have not met the goal of 100 members by the end of 1991, nor 200 members by the end of 1992, despite attempts to promote ARTE through announcements in publications and our brochure. A discussion of possible ways to recruit members followed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Group consensus was to propose and sponsor a one-day workshop at the 1993 NCTE convention in Pittsburgh. Paula Hodges volunteered to write and submit the proposal.

Paula Hodges moved to approve the following constitutional amendment as published in the Spring 1992 *A Work of ARTE* (vol. 2, no. 2) and in the 1992 ARTE Business Meeting Agenda, page 3:

Article VII—EXECUTIVE BOARD, section C. Term
The Executive Board members who are ex-officio nonvoting members shall serve a term concurrent with their tenures as chairs of standing committees. While their terms are one-year appointments, as state in **Article X—COMMITTEES, Section A. Standing Committees**, it is to be expected that on many occasions these chairs will be appointed to succeed themselves. When that occurs, they may serve more than one year as an Executive Board member.

Michelle Walker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting concluded at 6:35 P.M. with a round of applause for Jim Weate.

Submitted by,
Beth Hunnicutt, Secretary Pro Tem
November 25, 1992

Walloon Institute announces fourth annual program

This summer the Walloon Institute in Petoskey, Michigan will again hold two special week-long courses in the north woods resort atmosphere of Hemingway country. The first session, meeting June 23-27, covers **The Reading-Writing Workshop** and features nationally-noted experts like Donald Graves, as well as veteran classroom teachers who are making the workshop work every day. The July 7-11 session is Walloon's unique **Whole Language Workshop: Integrating Instruction from Kindergarten through College**, which focuses on the key ideas, activities, and classroom practices of holistic teaching at all grade levels.

All Walloon courses include a mixture of interactive demonstrations, grade-level group meetings, and extensive topic-choice sessions, allowing participants to both explore "big ideas" and bring home plenty of concrete, practical strategies for the classroom. Each Walloon week also features a special advanced-level strand, titled **Instructional Leadership for School Renewal**. This course offers professional growth for inservice leaders—those people in schools, districts, colleges, writing projects, and other agencies who design and conduct workshops, rewrite curricula, coach other teachers, consult with collegues, or provide classroom follow-up.

Attendance at all Walloon sessions includes housing and meal plan; graduate credit is optional. For further information, write the Walloon Institute's winter office at 897 Spruce Street, Winnetka, IL 60093, call (708) 441-6635, or FAX (708) 441-6664.

Jim Weate
429 West Fourth
Lamoni, Iowa 50140

A Work of ARTE

The Newsletter of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English

Volume 3, Number 2 *Summer, 1993*

Inside *A Work of ARTE* . . .

Oregon Small Schools Association Teacher of the Year and Oregon Teacher of the Year for 1992, **Sally Leahy** writes about the importance of outcomes (pages 2).

Assistant Professor **Linda Hollandsworth**, PhD. shares research she did on incoming college students' experiences with and attitudes toward writing (page 3).

Check updated membership information and read ARTE member **Mary Frances Linden**'s autobiographical piece (page 5).

ARTE member **Thomas Newcomb, PhD.** has been honored for his dedication to education and the guidance of children (page 7).

Notes from the Chair

ARTE has *raison d'etre*

by Jim Weate

Any organization must have a reason for existence, or it will soon cease to exist. It is my sincere belief that ARTE has a reason for existence, and I sincerely hope it does not go out of existence. What is more, I believe that a clear *raison d'etre* which is understood by ARTE members will enable us to grow and become stronger as an organization. I'm going to express a few of my thoughts about ARTE, and I invite all of you readers out there to respond and add to them.

Rural English teachers need to have contact with one another and with other rural teachers. They need to know what each other is facing, experiencing, doing and thinking. They need to share ideas, plans, successes, failures and frustrations. They need one another.

First of all, let me explain what has happened recently to my wife, not so people feel sorry for us, but to use her experiences as an example of the type of thing which could be avoided through better communication and support.

Gwen is a vocational home economics teacher. She not only teaches home economics but also serves as the advisor of the Future Homemakers of America (FHA) chapter. Because of the extra duties associated with FHA as well as the vocational part of home economics, she was on a ten-month contract until just over one year ago. Then, when the 1992-93 contracts were issued, she was cut to a regular nine-month contract and was told she should apply for a $1,500 Career Ladder (incentive pay) grant to make up the difference. Also, she was assigned to teach Spanish via satellite for one period and picked up the one period of ninth grade health class for the school when one of the physical education teachers was cut to half time. Basically, she was teaching home economics classes for four periods in the seven-period day.

Throughout this past year she was getting hints that she might be cut further to part time for the 1993-94 contract. In April contracts came out. She was reduced to three-sevenths time. That meant that the home economics program at her school, which has emphasized family relations, child development, health, nutrition, consumer economics, decision making, problem solving and interpersonal communications—the very things students need today since we are so short of these kinds of understandings—had been virtually eliminated. The superintendent explained he had decided to cut the home economics program since, as he saw it, with both spouses working in most homes and so many people eating out, people weren't interested in cooking and sewing any more.

Gwen and I chose to begin job hunting after her contract was reduced. She resigned her position. We sought jobs where we could both teach in one district or in districts in close proximity to one another. Many districts where we applied would not consider me, however, since I have four degrees: two bachelor's, one master's and one doctorate. A question asked during some interviews was, "Aren't you overqualified to be teaching in the public schools?" My answer was that students deserve the best we can give them. I had thought that being certified in English, social studies and business would help out, but it didn't seem to.

Perhaps we will have to leave rural America and find work in an urban environment, but we don't want to. We understand that superintendents and principals don't receive any more state aid for their schools if they have a Ph.D. on their staff than they do for a first-year, bachelor's level candidate. They are faced with keeping costs down, not seeing how much they can spend. It isn't really a question of how good the school can be made, but how much it will cost to operate the school, all because society doesn't realize children are our most precious asset. Even our administrators aren't aware that home economics isn't cooking and sewing.

My feeling is that teachers need to be in contact with one another to know the happenings and trends within the educational establishment. I do not believe that anything could or would have been done had the home economics teachers of northwest Missouri where Gwen has taught up until now been aware of what happened to her. In fact, it turns out that through-

(See Notes page 2.)

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(Notes from page 1)

out the area, a number of other home economics teachers experienced the same fate. Somehow something should be done to correct such irresponsible actions, but it will take more than the teachers in one subject area in one part of a state to mobilize.

We need our home economics teachers and courses too much when we see what is happening to our society. Without courses in child development, family relations, nutrituion and consumer economics, we are going to see even more societal breakdown and individual irresponsibility than we are already experiencing. All teachers in all areas throughout a state, or throughout the nation, must raise their voices collectively. Rural English teachers must be part of the collective voice.

Teachers, as much or more than any other group in society, should be helping to plot the course of our society and civilization. Yet, we don't get asked and don't come to the fore as much as we should. Not believing they should challenge anything or question authority, teachers tend to become such a complacent lot that they allow the very freedom they should protect most, freedom of speech, to be eroded away. At the very least, they have not used that freedom.

ARTE should bring out the freedom to speak which is needed among rural English teachers. Perhaps we should be more politically involved, also. I have been of the opinion that teachers need to be politically involved, but I have been opposed to teacher organizations telling me and other teachers how we should think on political issues. Recently, I've been wondering if my stance needs reconsideration, if for no other reason than we need to counter elements which have caused so much trouble for education.

Communication, support, overcoming isolation, sharing ideas, successes, plans and failures, frustrations and joys. All these and more can be part of our *raison d'etre*. Maybe even better reasons. exist. What are your thoughts?

I ask for a dialogue to emerge on the pages of *A Work of ARTE* to get a reading on what ARTE should be doing and how ARTE members judge the organization's reason for existence . Send your letters to Michelle Walker, Editor, *A Work of ARTE*, 4720 West Fillmore Road, Ithaca Michigan 48847.

Subject vehicle for learning

by Sally Leahy

A million years ago when I was in high school, I was placed in a special biology class. The teacher, Mrs. Trowbridge, was tough—frightening even—and the subject matter was more difficult than that of an ordinary biology class. (This was in the days before honors classes or TAG programs—even before SAT as a college entrance test.) I remember that I felt privileged to have been selected for the class and simultaneously terrified that I had to take it. My feelings were justified because it was a very tough semester.

Mrs. Trowbridge demanded performance. She was a stickler for detail, and she piled the work on as if she were the only teacher I had. Worse, she expected us to memorize everything. We had to learn all the bones of the body, the digestive process and all its terminology, the system of classification for living things, and more. Even more difficult, she wouldn't put up with a single incorrect approach to anything such as definition: if a word was a noun, it must be defined as a noun, a verb as a verb. There was never even the slighest question about whether we might not know the difference.

Now, many years later, I think back on those days and that tough semester and see implications I did not recognize then. Mrs. Trowbridge was, and still is, one of my favorite and most memorable teachers; but **I didn't learn very much biology from her.** I cannot remember the bones of the body nor most of the terminology for the digestive system; and if my life depended upon it, I couldn't give anyone any kind of intelligent data about the classifications she made us "learn."

On the other hand, I did learn a great deal about self-discipline and attention to detail. And I still know that words must be defined within their part of speech.

My point? Simple: outcomes are more significant than subject matter. Because I have rarely needed to use the names of the bones of the body, that memorization is long gone; but the self-discipline necessary to get things done on time and properly, the attention to significant detail, the ability to do well under pressure, and the awareness of correct process are still a part of my life style. It's true Mrs. Trowbridge taught me a lot, but not necessarily the things she thought she was teaching me.

Think on your own past education. What did your learn? What has stayed with you, and what have you completely forgotten? Unless you are a very rare person, you're going to recognize, whether you wish to or not, that **subject matter** simply wasn't the significant part of your education—in spite of your teachers.

The next logical step, of course, is to examine how you are teaching: what kind of results are you aiming for? Are those results significant, or are you going to be one of those teachers whose instructional success lies in the accidental side effects of your approach?

Outcome-Based Education is a reality and the most legitimate approach to educating youngsters. No one is suggesting that the learning skills be ignored, but there is tremendous difference between skilled performance and parroting facts. Young people who can solve problems, who understand the thinking process and can be confident that they are doing well, who can work with others, who recognize that they are a part of a system that can function only as successfully as they function, who have the skills to deal with their world are very different from those who can name the bones of the body, the capitals of all the states, and the eight parts of speech.

If you are still insisting that your students learn and be tested on data, then you are wrong. You are asking a human mind to function as an encyclopedia or as a computer disk. Human minds are not merely memory banks. More important, we live in a sophisticated world, and performance does not depend upon whether a person knows a fact but instead upon whether that person knows where to find what is needed and whether he/she knows what to do with it after it's found.

Take a look back on you own education and then do some evaluating. If what you see is what I saw and recognized, then isn't it time to do something

(See Vehicle page 5.)

Study shows students' writing experiences, attitudes

by Linda Hollandsworth

This paper includes the results of a study I completed during 1991-92 at Coastal Carolina College, a four-year branch of the University of South Carolina system. I was able to conduct this study from a grant that I received from the university.

Coastal Carolina College has an enrollment of 4,000 students and is located in Conway, a small town 14 miles west of Myrtle Beach. I was interested in learning about the writing skills and attitudes of our first-year students before they come to Coastal.

Members of my department complain bitterly that first-year students can't write, and my focus was to see what kinds of writing experiences students had before entering college and, also, to find out what their attitudes were about writing.

I took Ann Berthoff's advice and researched an area I was interested in as a teacher. Because more than half of our first-year student body (62 percent) comes from the two surrounding rural counties (We are, in effect, a community college in that sense.), I decided to focus on those students. I also considered what Maxine Hirston said about getting in touch with and analyzing the student audience for needed information, so I took the qualitative approach.

I obtained a list of the 223 incoming first-year students and randomly selected 123 to interview between Aug. 10 and Sept. 30, 1991. I conducted second interviews with 54 of these students. Of the students I interviewed, the average SAT score on the verbal was 396. After the English placement tests, 35 students were placed into English 100, a remedial English course; 88 were placed in English 101.

I focused on three primary areas in my research: 1. What are first-year students' prior writing experiences? 2. What models of composing do they bring with them into the college composition classroom? 3. What do students talk about in reference to their own writing? What themes, metaphors, attitudes do they express?

I followed a list of questions proposed by Nancy Atwell and later used second interview questions suggested by Donald Murray, Patick Hartwell, and Thomas Carnicelli (Figure 1).

I asked each student the same questions. I thought about the comment made by Shirley Brice Heath this past summer: "We don't need research to tell us that our students are different; we need research to satisfy what it is we want to know about our students and research that tells us about those differences."

Many composition teachers attempt to find out this information about students' writing by assigning first essays at the beginning of the semester: "What I Know About My Own Writing" or "My Strengths and Weaknesses as a Writer." This kind of assignment usually tells us the students' current attitudes about writing but seldom offers information about their prior writing experiences.

(See Research page 4.)

Student Interview Questions

First Interview

Questions 1-11: 123 students

1. What is your earliest memory of writing? How did your learn to write?
2. What was the best writing you ever did?
3. Who has helped you most to improve your writing?
4. Can you remember a specific unpleasant writing experience you've had? Explain.
5. What did you write and how much?
6. When did you write the most? What time of day?
7. How do you see yourself as a writer? What are your general impressions of English teachers? Of students who succeed in writing classes?
8. What kinds of anxieties do you have about your writing?
9. What do you know about "good writing"? How did you learn this? What "rules" of writing do you consistently break? Why?
10. How do you choose topics to write about?
11. What procedures do you go through before you start writing a paper? How do you get started?

Second Interview

Questions 12-23: 54 of the 123 students

12. About one particular paper written in high school:
    a. How did you choose your topic?
    b. How long did you work on that paper?
    c. How many drafts did you have?
    d. When did you change things?
    e. What and how much did you change?
    f. What was the best part of your paper?
    g. What was a part of your paper that you didn't like?
    h. What did you try to do in your paper?
    i. What problems did you have with your paper?
13. What do you know about revision? What does it mean to revise? How do you know what to revise?
14. What do you know about "audience" in your writing?
15. What goals do you have for yourself as a writer now? Later?
16. How do people write?
17. Why do people write?
18. What makes writing fun?
19. What makes writing difficult?
20. How much did you write in your classes?
21. How much do you intend to write after college?
22. How does a teacher decide what papers are good?
23. Are you a writer?

Figure 1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

(Research from page 3)

Sharing the results of my study (Figure 2) with members of my English department did three things: first, it allowed teachers to learn about the present attitudes about writing of the majority of our incoming students; second, it informed teachers about students' prior writing experiences; and third, it gave enough information so that teachers could do what Troyka suggests: relate new knowledge to the old in order to build on students' prior knowledge and experience.

When we ask students to tell us about their past writing experiences, we communicate to them an interest in their backgrounds as writers and also an interest in their future success.

Because of this study, our English department was able to secure funding from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education for teacher training in the local high schools. There we work closely with the local National Writing Project.

Coastal Carolina College
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 29578

Results - Student Interviews

I. N = 123

1. a. Earliest memories	
—before 5th grade	37
—after 5th grade	86
b. Where did you learn to write?	
—home	26
—school	97
2. Best writing	
—elemenatary school	72
—high school	51
3. Who helped?	
—high school teachers	84
—elem. school teachers	34
—parents	5
4. Unpleasant writing experiences	
—several	107
—none	16
5. What did you write?	
—research papers	92
(2 a year)	30
(1 a year)	62
(0)	31
—reports	62
—essays/themes	117
6. When did you write the most?	
—at school	82
—at home	41
7. Yourself as a writer?	
—no	114
—yes	9
b. Impressions of English teachers	
—teach the rules	78
—you write better	28
—other	17
c. Students who succeed in writing courses	
— learned the rules	35
—gifted	88
8. Anxieties	
—don't know grammar	80
—can't get started	20
—know the writing won't be good	16
—never enough time	7
9. What is good writing?	
—5 paragraphs with spelling and punctuation	91
—interesting subject	11
—other	21
10. Choosing topics	
—best when assigned	90
—topic of interest	33
11. Procedures	
—brainstorm, make a list and then write	68
—write one draft, then go back and correct, if time	55

II. N = 54

12.	
a. Choosing topic	
—teacher selected	48
—student selected	6
b. How long writing	
—less than an hour	31
—1-2 hours	15
—more than 3 hours	8
c. No. of drafts	
—0	29
—1	19
—2 or more	6
d. When - change?	
—while writing	39
—after first draft	10
—other times	5
e. What - change?	
—lower order concerns	54
—higher order concerns	14
f. Best part of paper	
—introduction	36
—none	8
—other	10
g. Part - didn't like	
—introduction	13
—including research	28
—other	13
h. What tried to do	
—not make errors	33
—prove a thesis	7
—other	14
i. Problems	
—too many errors	49
—other	5
13. Revision	
—writing over to correct mistakes	45
—changing parts around	9
14. Audience	
—teacher	43
—who paper is written for	11
15. Goals	
—learn punctuation and grammar	42
—write different types	5
—other	7
16. How- write?	
—follow formats given	15
—carefully, orderly	39
17. Why?	
—have to	42
—enjoyment	12
18. Fun	
—poetry	47
—things I know well	7
19. Difficult	
—assigned	51
—other	3
20. How much writing in class?	
—once a week	46
—once a day	6
21. How much writing after college?	
—none	32
—often	22
22. How does teacher decide on good papers?	
—follow rules	40
—state something interesting	14
23. Are you a writer?	
—yes	11
—no	33
—somewhat	10

Figure 2

(Vehicle from page 2)

about it? The methods are there, and the results in the classroom are electrifying. Imagine what Mrs. Trowbridge, with her dynamic personality and intensity, could have taught me if she had used her subject as a **vehicle** instead of the focus of her teaching. She would have been the one to teach me systems and why they exist and their significance in the world. How much more I could have gleaned from that exceptional woman if our time had been spent on outcomes instead of all those bits of data I've forgotten.

When I leave teaching, I am not particularly concerned that my students remember my name; but I do hope that what they'll say will go something like this: "Oh yeah, I remember that dragon lady. She was the one who always demended to know 'why?' and 'how?' and she was never satisfied until she made me think."

Glendale High School
Glendale Oregon 97442

Member Autobiography

by Mary Frances Linden

I was born in Houston,Texas March 8, 1954. Both my parents, whose parents had immigrated from Sicily in the early part of the century, had migrated from the Brazos River bottom to the Houston area and met and married in Houston. After forty years they have returned to College Station after Houston growth caused their farmland to be zoned as commercial property. My life story is largely a product of the modern history of rural education. The school I attended had been consolidated during the 1960s by bringing together students from Sugar Land, Stafford, and Missouri City, all now considered the greater Houston area. The school I attended was a AAA; and two years after I graduated in 1972, it more than doubled the size of its graduating class. Now, five large schools take the place of that one. So I have seen firsthand what urban growth does to the small farmer.

My husband, an artist, and I met in Houston in 1979 when I did my first year of public school teaching in an inner city African-American school. We married and left the city for a farm in Schulenburg where green rolling hills and trees and the pastoral life appealed to our creative spirits. For twelve years, we have remodeled our farmhouse and worked at various jobs to survive the hardships of rural economics. During this time, I taught in private and public rural schools and had many enlightening experiences with a culture that seemed very foreign to me even though it was so familiar.

My language arts and government backgrounds enhanced my flexibility in the schools, and so I taught in several settings before I decided that more profound work needed to be done at a higher level to make education better for many heretofore ignored groups of people. Coming from an Italian- American background, I have heard of the difficulties my parents and grandparents had in assimilating into the American culture. Being on the farm exposed me to minority groups who were from lower SES and cultural backgrounds. All of these experiences in my formative years contribute to my philosophy of education and my special interest in rural education.

Membership Update

One former member whose membership had expired has recently renewed. Mary Frances Linden, welcome back to our ranks.

Several new members have joined ARTE.

Galen R. Boehme
Kinsley High School
Kinsley, Kansas 67547

Terrell Bonnell
N. 2783 Shadow Road
Waupaca, Wisconsin 54981

Sonya M. Capps
P.O. Box 325
Bristol, Florida 32321

Robert Doxtator
Department of Language and Literature
Chadron State College
Chadron, Nebraska 69337

Nancy Foster
302 N. Madison
Lebanon, Illinois 62254

Dr. Linda Hollandsworth
Coastal Carolina University
P.O. Box 1954
Conway, South Carolina 29526

Stan Strickley
2617 W. Castle Court
Peoria, Illinois 61614

We welcome all of these new members and look forward to their contributions.

The ARTE Board of Directors approved institutional memberships, considering them as part of the building membership category. This was in response to the request of an institution to join up with our organization. This new institutional membership is

Write Source Educational Publishing House
Contact Person: Mary A. Gilding
Box 460
Burlington, Wisconsin 53105

We thank this organization for providing us assistance in serving the rural educational establishment.

Editorially yours . . .

Meaningful writing can help enrich all students' educations

by Michelle Walker

"Writing sucks, I don't want to take that class! This is how I felt as the second marking period was coming to an end and my classes were about to change. I dreaded taking a writing class, my health class was fun and the work was easy. I knew I was not a very good writer and I would struggle in a writing class. . . . I never heard of a thesis statement or thought about grammer and comma usage. I learned all these things and realized this class was good for me," Scott, one of my junior writing students, wrote in his reflective essay that serves as the final exam for the one-semester writing class my school has required for graduation for the last ten years.

How did I react? I smiled and thought to myself, "I'm a success. Scott knows his audience, has learned how to grab his reader's attention and has said something meaningful in an interesting way."

As you can see from this quote, Scott still struggles with run-ons and hasn't quite mastered commas (contrary to what he may think); however, he now has more confidence in his ability to express well the ideas that are important to him . He sees himself as a writer. In that, he's ahead of the 114 Coastal Carolina College freshmen in Linda Hollandsworth's study that say they are not writers.

I must confess that as I started editing this summer's newsletter, I didn't have a topic for my column, hoping in my brain-dried state at the end of the school year that all the space would be filled and I wouldn't need to write anything. But along came Linda's paper, one that ARTE board member Paula Hodges had heard her give at a conference, and I was off and running.

I was luckier than the 48 of 54 students Linda surveyed who said that the topics about which they wrote prior to coming to college were teacher selected. I felt bad that these students couldn't say that one thing they liked about their writing experiences was that they could choose their own topics, but I also felt validated in my attempts to give my junior and senior high students as much control as possible over what they write.

Tracy, another junior, said well what I hope we all as writing teachers know about and tap into in our students, "I find it much easier to write about something I can relate to rather than a topic of no interest." Or as Bethany, one my eighth graders advises, "Try to have at least one piece that is straight from the heart. Always write what you want to, not what someone else wants."

I realize that realistically we cannot always give students total control over what they write because of local and state curriculum and testing demands; I also realize that when these students enter the work force and are required to write, they most often will be told what to write. As educators, however, we will fail our students if we cannot help them see the value of writing and help them to like it. They need to believe in themselves in order to perform well as writers in school and in their future careers, and the best avenue I have found to instill writing "values" in students is the writing process, as posited by Nancy Atwell in her book *In the Middle* and by Linda Rief in her book *Seeking Diversity*.

This approach to writing instruction brings with it so many benefits, too many for me to discuss in my limited space; Atwell, Rief and others have taken books to cover them. But I would like you to hear some of my students' views on the subject.

The greatest revelation of writing workshop for my students seems to be the writing process and the necessity of multiple drafting to achieve quality writing. I feel proud that my students have gone beyond the "procedure" of the college freshmen who say their school writing experience involved writing one draft and going back and correcting that if there was time.

Carrie, a junior, wrote in her reflective essay, "Perhaps the most important thing I learned is the writing process. The writing process is a great way to calmly, rationally plan out a person's opinions. In using the process a person is able to take one fundamental idea and derive a whole paper filled with a balance of facts and opinions. . . . At the beginning of the class, I contributed a somewhat negative attitude towards the class. But as the semester continued, my negativity turned into complete enthusiasm. Which in turn contributed to my accomplishments."

Another junior, Nikkee, said, "I use to go from my prewriting on to my final draft. Now I've learned to write more than one draft to better my pieces. . . . Not only did writing several drafts help me edit better, it gave me a chance to better my paper by elaborating more on specific subjects to make my paper more effective and accurate."

"The writing process has helped me in a major way," Heather said. "Writing more than one rough draft for each paper has allowed me to improve each time I would write. I didn't even mind writing more than one rough draft. I knew from every draft I wrote I accomplished something new each time that would help me in the long run."

(See Writing page 7.)

A Work of ARTE is published three times a year by the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English and is a member of the NCTE Information Exchange Agreement.

The assembly welcomes submissions to this newsletter in the form of articles, letters, announcements, etc., which may be edited for length. Send all pieces for publication consideration to Michelle Walker, editor, 4720 West Fillmore Road, Ithaca, Michigan 48847

Membership in the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English of the National Council of Teachers of English may be obtained by contacting Willa Mae Kippes, P.O. Box 302, 401 12th Street, Gilcrest, Colorado 80623 and sending a check or money order for $10.

Building/institutional memberships are $25 per building/institution.

(Writing from page 6)

Even my eighth graders, a tough audience to convince, came to see the power of writing workshop.

"[I learned] to always write rough drafts so you have something to look back on as a prearrangement of the ideas that you plan to use for your story so that you can remember them. . . . Put as much hard work into your story as you can because, 'a book is only as good as it's writer' and 'the harder the author struggles, the less the reader will.'. . . If your attititude is good, so is your finished product," Laura Timmons said.

Even Steve, a reluctant writer to the end, said, "On the process I have learned it helps to make three or four drafts."

And bubbly Stacey echoed Steve's words in her essay ". . . having two or three drafts before the final one really helps, . . . I also learned that I enjoy writing—a lot! It's not a chore for me. It comes naturaly and it's fun."

I think, though, that Matt's words made me feel the most successful because they show a change in attitude and a sense of the rhythms of language even though the sentence error with which he wrestled all year is still evident.

"I have changed completely as a writer because of writing workshop. From leads to endings to mechanics," he said.

Other writers discussed the rewards of daily writing that can grow into a portfolio representing a year's or semester's struggles and growth.

"Looking through my folder is like looking at my childhood. The deeper I go, the more changes I see. I recognize all the mistakes and wish I hadn't made them, yet I learned something from them. I find, however, that my thoughts and feelings have not changed, only the way in which I put them on paper," Amanda, a junior, wrote.

From Jacquie we get a hint of something about writing that goes beyond mere communication skills.

"I've learned how to create interest grabbers, how to write a thesis and a conclusion. I think I have become a writer who cares about the quality of my work. . . . Writing class hasn't been just about writing. . . ," she wrote.

"Certain aspects of the class, such as keeping a portfolio, have given me deeper insight to myself and the writing process. . . . Being a creative writer is a soul-searching occupation," Maranda, a homebound junior in my creative writing elective, said.

The satisfaction of hard work and time was another motif in my eighth grade students' end of the year reflections.

"If I work hard, I'm sure I could be a successful writer some day. I think it's neat to be able to write down every thing in your mind, and put it together, this is how you get a successful piece of writing," Jodi said.

"I have learned good writing takes time you can't rush it. Also it doesn't take that long if you concentrate and stay on task. . . . I have learned I am not as bad of a writer as I thought. It can be fun to write if you like what your writing about," John wrote.

"I really like writing because I can get some of my ideas out of my head. I have really improved from first semester because I have a lot more experience with writing," Jared said.

"I've learned if you can't get it finished take it home. Sometimes I just rush myself. . . . I really used not to like writing, but now I like it better. I've learned that if you get stuck just open your mind to all sorts of ideas," Tina said.

And opening our minds to all sorts of ideas is just what we as teachers of elementary, middle school, secondary and post-secondary students must continue to do if we are to guide them in their development as confident writers who can find personal and professional satisfaction in writing.

Linda Hollandsworth's interview results have helped me reaffirm my commitment to give my students the very best experience possible not only in writing but also in reading, speaking and listening. The questions she asked are ones, I believe, that all of us can use as goals in our teaching.

I hope first, that we can minimize unpleasant writing experiences and create those which mean something to our students and challenge them to think; second, that we can show students that each and every one of them is a writer who has something worthwhile to say; third, that we can make them believe that they all can "learn the rules" of writing and that writing success is not limited to the "gifted"; and fourth, that we can demonstrate that committing time outside of the classroom and writing multiple drafts to revise and not merely to edit for superficial errors will make them accomplished writers.

Although ababandoning the old ways of teaching writing, can be painful and scary, the act of throwing aside grammar books and prescriptive writing texts and letting students write, guiding them through mini-lessons and individual conferencing, encouraging peer feedback, showing them the importance of "correctness" in the context of their own pieces and helping them publish their work for real audiences might be the most rejuvenating experience of a teacher's and her students' lives. I am heartened to see that the results of Linda's study led to inservice training for teachers in her area, but I believe the kind of writing instruction needed is already going on in many rural and other schools around the country.

ARTE member named teacher of year

Thomas L. Newcomb (Ph.D), teacher at Bloomfield-Mespo Local in Trumbull County (Ohio), was named primary teacher of the year by the Youngstown-Warren Area Chamber of Commerce at a special recognition breakfast June 15.

Newcomb, a member of ARTE, teaches third grade at Mesopotamia Elementary and oversees the Reading is Fundamental Federal Project, third grade Young Authors program, Arts in School program, and a new Partnerships in Education Project.

His classroom, publisher of the school newspaper The Mespo School News, is also a registered chapter of Kids for Saving Earth.

Newcomb is a published author and trustee of Grand River Radio Network, a new educational broadcasting group in portions of Trumbull and Geauga Counties. He is the previous winner of the Trumbull County A+ Teacher Award and the Margaret McNamara Certificate of Honor from Reading is Fundamental.

Newcomb and his wife Kathy, also a Mespo teacher, and son Matthew, have lived in rural Ohio for seven years.

Jim Weate
429 West Fourth
Lamoni, Iowa 50140

A Work of ARTE

The Newsletter of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English

Volume 3, Number 3 *Fall 1993*

Inside *A Work of ARTE* . . .

Jim Weate, past chairperson of ARTE, shares parting thoughts as he leaves office (pages 3-4).

See ARTE election results (page 6).

Additions, deletions, and changes in the ARTE membership are highlighted (page 5).

An article by **James E. Davis**, NCTE Past President, gives suggestions for getting more politically involved in educational policy making (page 7).

Notes from the Chair

New chair takes on challenges

by Craig Akey

I face my position as chair of ARTE with enthusiasm and trepidation. The enthusiasm comes from the knowledge that teachers have been interested in ARTE for several years, that the organization has a firm foundation upon which it can grow, and that members have been active in workshops, in producing journals, and in having an anthology before a publisher. The accomplishments I have seen since I attended NCTE in Baltimore have been nearly miraculous.

These same couses for enthusiasm, however, also account for the trepidation. To continue the effort and be a force that can make ARTE continue to grow is a fearful prospect. These prospects become frightening when looking at the restraints that educators must continually endure. In Wisconsin, for example, teachers' salaries are limited through legislation to a 2.1 percent increase annually for three years. The additional 1.7 percent increase allowable for fringe benefits—including health and dental insurance—means that take-home pay may actually decrease during this time. How then will teachers continue to join organizations and travel to conferences under such financial constraints? The gap between dedication and reality is lessened by these prospects.

On the other hand, perhaps crises will make us grow stronger. As teachers in rural schools, we can develop an interdependence and, eventually, some power through ARTE. Crises beyond finances are on the near horizon. School choice may force more change in a year than many schools have undergone in several decades. Through ARTE communication we may develop a network to help cope with these changes and to suggest meaningful educational changes to one another.

Technology is another force that is affecting rural schools. Fiber optics allow two-way audio and visual communication so that a teacher in one school may teach AP English to six students in his/her school and to as many as 20 students in four other schools simultaneously. How will rural schools enjoy the benefits of this technology without suffering staff lay-offs?

I would like, in the next two years, to see ARTE double its membership. I would like to see ARTE become a source for discussion of issues affecting our schools, perhaps in a round table newsletter page. And, I would like to further ARTE as a power source with administrators and legislators.

Committee chairs are needed to help fulfill these goals. I am enthusiastic that the fears I have will be assuaged by those who will help. A unified effort may help stem the crises that many educators predict.

Annual business meeting set

The 1993 Assembly of Rural Teachers of English Annual Business Meeting will be held at the Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

This meeting is scheduled for North Meeting Room 2 (Room N-2) of the Pittsburgh Convention Center on Saturday, November 20 from 5:30-6:30 P.M.

RC 019447

Editorially yours . . .

New resources available to enrich English instruction

by Michelle Walker

Do you get a lot of junk mail? Are you sick of all those catalogs hawking everything from cashews to elephant coffee mugs? Me too. In addition to the normal homeowner's junk mail, I also, as newsletter editor, am bombarded by information mail, which I often "chuck" for untimeliness or lack of space.

For this issue's column, though, I've drawn on this information as a resource for those of you who are looking for new ideas to put a spark in your teaching now that we're a quarter of the way through the school year (Can you believe it?).

One item I found of special interest, I think, to rural teachers is a series of 11 videotapes, ranging from 15-22 minutes in length, in the *Her Own Words* series. Titles I like are *Her Own Words: Pioneer Women's Diaries*; *Patchwork: A Kaleidoscope of Quilts*;; and *Prairie Cabin: A Norwegian Pioneer Woman's Story*. For more information on the whole series, contact Her Own Words, PO Box, 5264, Madison, WI 53705, 608-271-7083.

Also, a new book published in June has piqued my interest and, I hope, might be of use to you.

NCTE continues its series on Classroom Practices in Teaching English in volume 27, *Ideas for the Working Classroom*. The essays in this collection, edited by NCTE Committee on Classroom Practices Chair Kent Gill, describe methods for teaching English and language arts while increasing students' self-esteem and respect for others, awareness of social issues, appreciation of literature, understanding of connections among disciplines, and involvement in their own learning.

Among the essays in the first part of the book, Berverly McColley of Norfolk Academy, Virginia, describes how she attempts to build a "collective identity" in her English classroom, "that supports and encourages the individual." She helps each student identify and use his or her unique talents in a variety of classroom writing and performance assignments. In this way, the interdependence that is characteristic of a community is established, while appreciation of individual differences also grows.

Part two of the book, "Exploring Social Issues," presents strategies for using contemporary social issues such as AIDS to teach skills that Gill describes as central to English and language arts learning--"to do research and reading in contemporary and historical materials, to communicate orally and in writing, to activate a whole range of thinking skills, and to apply work skills to the completion of a wide-ranging study of an issue."

Maximizing students' appreciation of literature is the focus of essays in part three. The authors offer techniques for making Shakespeare accessible to high school students, and for linking classic literary pieces with contemporary culture and politics. Joel Kammer of Piner High School in Santa Rosa, California, uses modern literature featuring Navajo protagonists in his senior English class, hoping "to provide an opportunity for some integrated learning that encompasse[s] geography, critical thinking, sociology, and human relations."

The merging of disciplines is the focus of part four. The essays in this section describe interdisciplinary integrations--such as that between historical research and poetry writing used by Myra Zarnowski of Queens College, CUNY--as well as the intradisciplinary merging of reading and writing through the use of cento assignments, described by University of Texas-Elpaso professor G. Douglas Meyers.

The final set of essays stresses the benefits of involving students as active learners in the classroom. Students in a Chicago high school, for example, become more independent learners when the traditional "frontal" style of teacher-dominated classroom interaction is replaced by the use of "opinionnaire" activities, in which literary themes are explored through student debate/discussion and writing.

Evident in all 31 essays in *Ideas for the Working Classroom* is the dedication and creativity of their authors. As editor Kent Gill notes, these are "true educators, classroom teachers who are drawing performance out of their students, rather than pouring education into them."

***Ideas for the Working Classroom*. Classroom Practices in Teaching English, Vol. 27. Kent Gill, editor, and the NCTE Committee on Classroom Practices. 178 pages, paperbound. Price: $12.95; NCTE members, $9.95. Available from NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Stock No. 22574-0015.)**

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Change, dreams: two urgent needs

by Jim Weate

I attended my first major league baseball game, a contest between the Cleveland Indians and the Detroit Tigers, back in 1948 when I was in junior high school. Bob Feller and Hal Newhouser were the opposing pitchers for nearly the entire game until Cleveland called up the great Satchel Paige, one of the first Negroes (the term used in that day) in major league baseball, as a reliefer for Bob Feller. The next year the New York Yankees began their unprecendented five-year domination of the World Series, playing three of those series against their cross-town rivals the Brooklyn Dodgers, one against another cross-town rival the New York Giants, and the fifth against the neighboring Philadelphia Phillies. Since those days, designations have changed from Negro to black and Afro-American; major league cities changed from sixteen east of the Mississippi (I know, St. Louis is west, but just barely) in the old, traditional metropolitan areas to 28 teams, four using a state rather than a city name (Florida, California, Texas, and Colorado) scattered across the country and two not even in the United States (Toronto and Montreal).

Am I against change? I hope not!

Sure, I've been prejudiced, but I'm not proud of it, and I welcome any improvement of the condition which Afro-Americans gain. One change which was needed, and still isn't complete, is the overcoming of prejudice both in me and in society. I count Afro-Americans among my best friends today. I realize prejudice hurt the country—whites and blacks—and me. It's time we end it. I work on it in myself and in my students. We've got to pull together or our society is going to be more of a mess than it already is.

Regarding baseball, sure, I disliked the Giants and Dodgers moving from New York and Brooklyn. But, I adjusted to that. I can also handle a Canadian team winning the World Series. And I can even understand more than eight teams in the league.

So, change I can handle.

Massive change started for me in the fall of 1945 when my science teacher told our class to turn to page 365 and look at the statement, "The atom is the smallest particle of matter. It cannot be divided." He informed us that earlier in the year the facts of science had been publicly rewritten; the world would never be the same again. Even in politics there had been change, for that same year Harry S (without a period) Truman became President; It's hard for me to imagine even yet that I was nearly 11 before I saw a new face in the office of the Presidency, and I grew up thinking war was the natural state of things with Hitler being the cause of it all.

Yet, lack of change and acceptance of the status quo does not mean we can't have dreams. I dreamed of the day one of my uncles would return from a German prisoner of war camp, Stalag 17, located near Krems, Austria, just outside of Vienna, and another uncle could return from the Pacific Theater where he was serving as a machinist's mate on an LST, preparing for the invasion of Japan.

For a child, these dreams were important. But, they were insignificant in comparison with what I began dreaming as I became older. My dream of unshackling my uncles has grown to include freedom of the mind and soul for millions who had received and, to a degree, still experience servitude. I have come to realize the effects of prejudice upon people. I am beginning to dream with the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Each of us, I'm sure, has dreams and goals which guide our lives, for without them, as Langston Hughes says, "Life is a barren field/Frozen with snow." Sharing these dreams and goals is important, also, because such sharing enables us to know the commonality of our thinking. Perhaps these thoughts have weighed especially heavy upon me as my three and one-half years as chair—first of the Committee on English Language Arts in Rural Schools and more recently of the successor organization, the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English—draw to a close. So what are my dreams and goals?

My dream writ large is to help rural education. My subsidiary dreams, in order to fulfill that larger one, are several. One dream is related to ARTE: to see ARTE become a stable affiliate of NCTE. Through the establishment of ARTE, I believe English teaching in rural schools will have a stronger voice in NCTE. Along with the other ARTE officers, I had created several goals for ARTE: a quality newsletter, 200 members by the end of 1992, an anthology, an announcement about ARTE to NCTE state and regional affiliates, and a list of ways ARTE could serve the profession and the public. In the Spring 1993 issue of *A Work of ARTE*, I reviewed these ARTE goals and mentioned that ARTE members attending the 1992 Louisville Copnvention believed that 200 members by the end of 1992 was unrealistic and that a more realistic goal was to reach that figure by the end of 1995. All other goals have been met (The anthology is still being revised but should be out soon.) other than a list of ways we can help our public.

I would like to propose that list of ways, to be accepted or rejected by the membership at the Pittsburgh Convention. My proposed list of ways is as follows:

- encourage newsletter articles that can be reprinted in local newspapers to promote

(See Dreams page 4.)

(Dreams from page 3)

- inform the public how ARTE is promoting rural education in general and rural English language arts teaching in particular
- work with the public in such activities as PTA/PTO organizations where the goals of English language arts in rural schools can be shared
- create local, state, regional and national goals for English language arts education
- disseminate the goals and objectives of the NCTE, giving interpretation to the effects of these goals and objectives upon rural education, especially as they affect the larger public
- work with rural teachers in parallel organizations such as NCSS, NSTA, NCTM, SCA, AAHPERD, and AVA to promote rural education

Another dream which I have is to see rural education become a full-fledged partner in the educational scene, along with urban and suburban education. I firmly believe that ARTE is part of the answer to the challenge. There are many other partial answers to this problem, involving aggressive action on the part of the rural teachers in every state in the union and in every subject area, both at the state level and at the national level. I plan to expand my efforts during the remaining five and one-half years before I reach 65 (and maybe some time after that) for small, rural school districts.

One change which I welcome and is inevitable is that my term as chair of ARTE will end. That does not mean I will have no voice in ARTE; I will become the past chair, which is a voting position on the Executive Board. Nor does this change mean that my enthusiasm for is diminished. The "change" part is that I will no longer be the one largely responsible for decision making, which is good. New ideas are needed. Someone else can wrestle with the problem of getting 200-plus members for tax-exempt and mailing status. The new chair will have new ideas about what to do and will be able to build upon the foundation which has been laid during my administration. Those who will succeed the present officers have all been active during the last four years, many of them having held an office during those years.

The new officers will figure out ways not yet imagined for ARTE to have an impact upon the NCTE, the teaching profession and the public at large. It's a big world and it's ours for the taking and using, in a friendly sort of way. Craig Akey, the newly elected chair, is a competent person and will perform admirably in the coming months, maintaining the momentum which has already begun. The other three officers will also give ARTE direction as it heads into its second phase which could very well be as different as baseball became when the color barrier was finally removed.

Satchel Paige pitched his last major league game when he was an estimated 59 years old, long after most players usually retire. In fact, he didn't even make the major leagues until he was about age 42 because of racial prejudice. But he didn't give up, and in the process he became an ensign of hope for many others, finally gaining Hall of Fame status in 1971. I am pleased to have watched him back when acceptance of change was difficult. I'm humbled to have shared in those moments of change as a dream coming true.

I look forward to the day when ARTE will help usher in a new day for rural education, an era where it assumes its rightful place in a prestigious educational network. (Could President Clinton perhaps take on educational reform as his next priority?) While a new day for rural education will be nearly as late in coming as Satchel Paige's entry into baseball, we could find it winning its place in the educational equivalent of Cooperstown, just as Satchel achieved his recognition.

If change could bring about such results, I'm in favor of it because such happenings for rural education are among my dreams. Change and dreams: two urgent needs. And with such yearnings, I pass the gavel to my successor.

Lamoni, Iowa

Creative writing opportunities help rural students

by Marlow Ediger

Rural school pupils need ample opportunities to engage in creative writing because creativity is needed in society to identify and solve relevant problems. Tried and true solutions to problems tend not to work. Thus novelty, uniqueness and originality are needed in attempts to resolve numerous problematic situations, and many kinds of creative writing forms might be emphasized in the rural school language arts curriculum to promote creative thinking. Poetry writing, especially, is an effective form of creativity.

I have supervised student teachers in the public school for approximately 30 years, and one of these student teachers helped guide pupils to do well in creative writing of verse. The station for the student teaching experience was a rural school, which in September was completely surrounded by growing corn. There were 12 pupils in the fifth grade class, and they received much personal attention with both the regular and student teacher monitoring their progress.

Previously, pupils had studied and written couplets and triplets. The new lesson was to write limericks, with the student teacher having clearly stated objectives, learning opportunities, and evaluation procedures in her lesson plan. To achieve objectives, the student

(See Creativity page 5.)

(Creativity from page 4)

teacher stressed the first activity, which guided pupils to view a set of farm illustrations. These were large enough for all to see and discuss. The first illustration showed a Holstein dairy animal. Pupils were asked to write individually or with a friend a couplet pertaining to the dairy cow. Since review was emphasized here, pupils tended to write and complete the assignment with little lost time. Two samples of this excercise are as follows:

Holstein Cows
Large animals that give much milk
Each drop feels like soft silk.

The Dairy
Holstein cows eat much grain and hay
The dairy man works hard to give them this each day.

Pupils volunteered to read their couplets to others in the classroom setting. Each was assessed in terms of having two lines with ending words rhyming. Two pupils had problems thinking of a couplet. They had difficulties with hearing rhyme and were allowed to choose on the next learning opportunity to write unrhymed poems if they preferred. Although ending words needed to rhyme in the writing of couplets, major stress was placed upon ideas within the poem. Group praise was provided by the student teacher since all who completed their poems had original content in their creative verse. Creativity here came in degrees. Selected individuals revealed much creativity as shown by the two examples above.

In sequence, the student teacher briefly reviewed with learners the meaning of triplets. She then showed a large illustration of weaning pigs in a pen. The contents of this picture were discussed with the learn-

(See Creativity page 6.)

Membership Update

One former member whose membership had expired has recently renewed. Dick deRosa, welcome back to our ranks.

Several new members have joined ARTE. The first one is another institutional membership; the others are individuals.

Clintonville Public School District
26 9 th Street
Clintonville, Wisonsin 54929-1595

Marlow Ediger
Rt. 2, Box 38
Kirksville, Missouri 63501

Sally S. Leahy
1634 Starveout Road
Azalea, Oregon 7410

Anne McKenna
W 7880 Crestwood Road
Antigo, Wisconsin 54409

Charles E. Murrell
5622 Campus Drive
Virginia, Beach, Virginia 23462

Mary Ellen Thornton
Leverett's Chapel Independent School District
Rt. 2, Box 33
Overton, Texas 75684

We welcome all of these new members and look forward to their contributions.

The chair apologizes to Stan Strickler of Peoria, Illinois. In the last issue (Summer 1993) of *A Work of ARTE*, Stan's surname was incorrectly given as Strickley. Please change your records to the correct spelling of Strickler. My apologies, Stan.

One ARTE member has changed his mailing address over the summer. Please notice that our good friend Jack E. Lorts is now superintendent of Central Howell School District #540, 8832 Silverton Road NE, Silverton, Oregon 97381. Congratulations and best wishes in your new position, Jack.

Another member Agnes Howshar has a change of post office box number from Box 456 to 459. Her changed address should read: Agnes Howshar, Box 459, Guernsey, Wyoming 82214.

One member has changed her name: Mary Frances Linden is now Mary Frances Agnello.

Several previous members of ARTE have not renewed their memberships. Those who should be dropped from your memberships are the following:

Sarah Bennett
Sandra M. Couch
Everett Gardner
David C. Laubach
Alfredo C. Lujan
Margaret E. McIntosh

(Creativity from page 5)

ers. Next, pupils were encouraged to write a triplet. They were again given the time needed to complete a quality triplet like the following:

Pigs on a Farm
Young pigs are ready to eat grain
They eat much during the rain
These pigs will be housed in the main.

Pigs and More Pigs
Many pigs are in a batch
They are difficult to match
One looks like he has a patch.

Again the ending words of each poem were evaluated in terms of rhyme. One pupil had the word *watch* rhyming with *catch* and *latch*. Although these words pattern in spelling with the *atch* ending, the rhyme pattern is not too consistent.

Learners were asked to pay attention to ending words rhyming rather than the ending words patterning in spelling. Further, they were asked to think of other words than those used in their poem that would also fit their rhyme pattern.

Thus, in the first triplet above the student considered which words would rhyme with *grain*, *rain* and *main* and would make creative sense in the poem. A revised poem resulted in the following:

Young pigs are ready to eat in Spain
They eat too much in the water drain
These pigs will be housed in the crane.

Pupils enjoyed playing with words and noticing patterns in rhyme and in spelling. Time was given to all who wished to share their poems orally with other learners, and each pupil volunteered to post his/her poem on the bulletin bulletin.

The two pupils who could not hear rhyme well when writing a couplet wrote free verse instead. Thus a pupil wrote the following:

Pigs in a pen
run in circles
eat much
drink water from the waterer
huddle close together.

In sequence, the student teacher read orally three limericks she had composed personally. These were then neatly printed on the chalkboard. Pupils were asked to describe the limericks.

It did not take long for the class to discover that in a limerick lines one, two and five rhyme and lines three and four rhyme. One learner stated that a limerick is a combination of a couplet (lines three and four) and a triplet (lines one, two and five), which contains rhythm and meter and usually starts with the words "There once was . . . ."

At this point learners asked if they could write a limerick with a friend. Two desired to write the limerick on an individual basis. The two learners who had difficulty hearing rhyme asked to join peers who were working on their limericks. Each joined a different set of pupils who were highly accepting of others.

Excitement was very high in writing and sharing the completed limericks. Pupils selected their own titles in writing their poems and created poems like the following:

Holidays
There once was a holiday great
Which determined a small boy's fate
He slept and he dined
Until he grew and he shined
Then he won a wonderful gold plate.

Four pupils voluntarily wrote limericks as homework, which they brought to class two days later. The student teacher read each of these limericks to classmates. Enthusiasm is contagious!

In closing, rural school pupils should have ample opportunities to engage in creative experiences. Creative thinking is necessary, not only in the language arts but also in life's endeavors.

New ideas are needed for society to progress and to provide the good things in life for all persons. Teachers need to stimulate and encourage creative thought by pupils in excercises like the one described here.

In oral communications and in written work, creativity as a major goal can become reality.

Northeast Missouri State University
Kirksville, Missouri 63501

New ARTE officers to assume duties

The nominations committee under the direction of Pauline Hodges conducted the first regular election for ARTE since we organized a little over two years ago. (That first election in 1991 was not a regular election because of the uniqueness of the assembly not being an established organization, so rules of regular elections could not apply.) This first regular election was held by mail during August and early September. The results are as follows:

The ARTE membership selected Craig Akey of Clintonville, Wisconsin, as the new chair; Sara Parkin of Longview, Washington, will be serving as associate chair; Beth Hunnicutt of St. Helens, Oregon, is the new secretary; and Willa Mae Kippes of Gilcrest, Colorado, is assuming the duties of treasurer.

We wish the best for these four as they assume their new posts, and we need to pledge them our support.

Tips for Influencing Public Policy

by James E. Davis, NCTE Past President

In the Spring 1993 issue of the Ohio Journal of the English Language Arts, *published by the Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, Davis shared his ideas on how NCTE and its members can influence public policy. The following is a portion of what he said.*

The Council's Role

In my years on the Council's Executive Committee (I am now in my fourth), I have tried to do all that I could to get us more actively involved in doing something about the conditions under which students learn and teachers teach, primarily through influencing public policy. And it is surely not just my idea. The Council has been trying to do this for years. SLATE was founded in the mid-seventies. Recently the Strategic Plan of the Council listed eighteen objectives, almost all of which require political action if they are to be implemented. Among the objectives which speak more particularly to political action are numbers three, four, seven, eight, ten and eighteen. They state:

The Council influences actions by policymakers at all levels regarding issues of literacy and language use and works to advance public awareness of current theory and research findings related to the development of literacy.

The Council promotes intellectual freedom at all educational levels.

The Council promotes the institutional, instructional, and community conditions under which literacy best develops.

The Council promotes methods of assessment that are fully informed by practice, theory, and research.

The Council promotes improved policies and practices in the recruitment, preparation, credentialing, evaluation, and retention of educators.

The Council promotes its missions, objectives, and goals at local, state, regional, national, and international levels.

What We Should Work For

Obviously, the political action on most of these objectives would occur at the local and state levels, so affiliates will always be our first line of defense (and sometimes offense) in these matters. Here are some things we should work for:

We should work for laws and regulations providing for smaller classes.

We should work for gaining a greater measure of control by teachers.

We should work for funding to permit teachers to return to study.

We should work for teachers to have released time and other support to attend professional meetings.

We should work for active student-centered learning.

We should work for education to change those who would measure our work and that of our students on the simplistic basis of standardized test scores.

We should work toward assuring that our colleagues are well-educated, active professionals who understand modern theory, research, and practice and who reflect the diversity of society both by what and how they teach and also by who they are.

We should work to promote the idea that language study is a unified whole, to be taught in an integrated fashion with a focus on wide reading in our diverse literary tradition, including works by men and women of many ethnic and cultural groups.

We should work for rich resources for students and teachers.

We should work to strengthen state and local capabilities for curriculum development. One way to help in this is to provide a framework of standards that the profession generally accepts.

How to Start

To influence, we must first educate ourselves as to what is really going on in our society. Specifically, we must understand political processes better than we have in the past because we must work within that system if we are to improve it. President James Madison said that knowledge would always govern ignorance and that "a people that mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power that knowledge brings." Substitute "English language arts teachers" for "a people" and add "with vigilance and continued hard work" and you have the necessary ingredients for empowerment!

Some Practical Suggestions

Don't view public officials as enemies. If you do, you won't accomplish much.

Be confident, but don't expect miracles.

Empathize with public officials as much as you can.

Develop political contacts before problems arise.

Don't deliver ultimatums (unless you know you want to fail).

Compliment officials when they do things well. Recognize them!

Don't get mad (and if you do, don't do it in public).

Don't merely point out problems; propose solutions.

Don't be afraid to compromise. If it makes you feel better, call it "consensus."

Know that you're in this for the long haul and prepare to keep coming back.

Realize that you are not the only one trying to influence the public official.

Don't engage in personal attacks. Yes, it is tempting, but not helpful.

Prepare thoroughly.

Be careful about making promises, but if you make them, keep them.

Don't try to fight all brushfires. Some of them will burn themselves out of their own accord. You don't have limitless energy and resources, so pick your targets well.

Maintain a vision of ultimate goals you would like to attain, but settle for successive approximations.

Have some fun in the process, or you will burn out.

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